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Diana T Fritz 05/24/2007 04:25:50 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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CONFIDENTIAL

SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 28, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1983 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: ECON, ETRD, PREL, PHUM, PGOV, SOCI
Captions: None
Subject: UAEG REACTS -- AND OVERREACTS - TO SARS
Ref: None

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 01983

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: ECON
INFO: DCM P/M POL AMB
Laser1:
INFO: FCS

DISSEMINATION: ECON
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM: RAALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: ECON: GARANA
CLEARED: ECON: TEWILLIAMS

VZCZCADI889
RR RUEHC RUCPDOE RUEHZM RUEHTU
DE RUEHAD #1983 1180615
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 280615Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9591
INFO RUCPDOE/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0505

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 001983

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL 04/26/2008
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAEG REACTS -- AND OVERREACTS - TO SARS

1. (U) Classified by DCM Richard A. Albright reasons
1.5 (B) and (D).

2. (U) The UAE Ministry of Health will install thermal
scanners at Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports to check the
temperatures of airline passengers as a defense
against SARS. Passengers traveling from SARS infected
countries will submit special disembarkation cards
with their contact information in the UAE to keep
track of their whereabouts. Transit passengers from
SARS-affected countries will not be allowed off their
flights and those who need to change flights will be
sequestered in a separate hall away from other

passengers.

¶3. (U) Medical teams have been assigned to monitor passengers arriving from east Asia until the scanners are installed. If someone is observed with breathing difficulties or a high temperature, the individual will be isolated and given a check-up. Passengers are also told to go to a public health clinic if they feel any of the SARS symptoms within ten days of arrival.

¶4. (C) An advisor to the Chairman of Abu Dhabi's Civil Aviation Department Patrick Gordon, told Econoff that a Gulf Air flight from China had been turned back in the early morning hours of April 26 by orders from the highest levels of the Ministry of Health and CID. Though all the passengers had been checked for SARS-like symptoms before they boarded the flight, officials have become paranoid about incoming flights from east Asia and refused permission for the flight to land. (Note: The flight was re-routed back to China via Sudan and Bahrain. End note.) Gordon stated that the UAE's response to SARS was in a state of flux and that officials were meeting to coordinate a permanent plan for air travel from east Asia, which might possibly include a total ban on such flights.

¶5. (C) Comment: The UAE's response to SARS is a work in progress. Having initially responded slowly to implementing safety procedures for fear of frightening businesspeople and tourists, the UAEG might now be overreacting. The public posture is in line with the international standards recommended by WHO, but behind the scenes, officials are scrambling to implement a cohesive program. With regard to the re-routing of the Gulf Air flight, we would defer to Embassy Muscat but believe the return may have resulted from a decision by the Omani Civil Aviation Authorities, who are the overseers/regulators of Gulf Air. End comment.

Wahba